

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 OMB-01

TRSE-00 ABF-01 OES-07 SP-02 L-03 NSC-05 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 SS-15 AID-05 /084 W

-----130826Z 059106 /10

R 121215Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6427

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 1180

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, SS, UNHCR

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO UNHCR APPEAL FOR SAHRAOUI REFUGEES

REF: A) STATE 098562, B) NOUAKCHOTT 1067, C) RABAT 2399

1. WE RECOMMEND THAT DEPARTMENT RESPOND FAVORABLY
TO UNHCR APPEAL.

2. AS IN MOST SITUATIONS OF THIS KIND, SAHARA PROBLEM
IS POLITICAL AND SAHRAOUI REFUGEES FIND THEMSELVES
IN TINDOUF REGION FOR POLITICAL REASONS. AGAIN FOR
POLITICAL REASONS, SOME OF THE PEOPLE IN CAMPS MAY
NOT BE SAHRAOUI, AND SOME MAY INDEED BE THERE
AGAINST THEIR WILL. OUR UNHCR CONTACTS AGREE READILY
THAT FACTS ARE VERY HARD TO COME BY IN TINDOUF, OR
FOR THAT MATTER, IN ALGIERS.

3. MANY COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN UNWILLING TO SEPARATE
POLITICAL FROM HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS. RICH
ARABS, WITH PROBABLE EXCEPTION OF LIBYA, HAVE BEEN
RELUCTANT TO OFFEND KING HASSAN, AND A NUMBER OF
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EUROPEAN STATES HAVE NOT WISHED TO BECOME INVOLVED.
MOST OF REST OF THIRD WORLD, OF COURSE, NOT IN POSITION
TO MAKE CONTRIBUTION EVEN IF IT WISHED TO DO SO.

4. WE HAVE NO ILLUSIONS THAT CONTRIBUTION WILL DO
GREAT THINGS FOR US POLITICALLY IN THIS COUNTRY.
ALGERIANS HAVE MENTIONED NEITHER OUR EARLIER \$100,000

CONTRIBUTION TO SAHRAOUI TO ICRC NOR OUR FAILURE TO RESPOND TO UNHCR APPEAL. ALTHOUGH WE WILL ENSURE OUR CONTRIBUTION IS KNOWN IN GOA, WE DOUBT THAT GOA WILL EXPRESS APPRECIATION FOR NEW GESTURE ON OUR PART OR THAT SUCH A MOVE WILL CHANGE ALGERIAN SUSPICION THAT WE ARE OUT TO GET THEM IN SAHARA.

5. NEVERTHELESS, WE ARE PERSUADED THAT CONTRIBUTION IN ORDER FOR BOTH POLITICAL AND HUMANITARIAN REASONS. WE HAVE OFTEN PUBLICLY REITERATED OUR NEUTRAL STANCE ON SUBSTANCE OF ISSUE, BUT OUR ACTIONS, SUCH AS VOTES IN UN, MILITARY SALES TO MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO AND CONCOMITANT REFUSAL TO SELL CERTAIN NON-SOPHISTICATED MILITARY ITEMS TO ALGERIANS, AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS, HAVE SUPPORTED MOROCCANS AND MAURITANIANS. WE DO NOT QUESTION WISDOM OF THIS TILT. BUT IF WE WANT TO BE ABLE TO CONTINUE TALKING ABOUT NEUTRALITY WITH THE ALGERIANS, WE NEED TO HAVE SOME TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF IT. LOW-KEY REFUGEE ASSISTANCE BASED ON DEMONSTRATED NEEDS IS A PRETTY SMALL GESTURE GIVEN MAGNITUDE OF ASSISTANCE WE ARE PROVIDING OTHER SIDE.

6 FURTHERMORE, HUMANITARIAN NEED EXISTS. IF MOST ASPECTS OF REFUGEE PICTURE ARE CLOUDY, THEIR EXISTENCE, PROBABLY IN A NUMBER NO LESS THAN 50,000, AND THEIR DEMONSTRATED NEED FOR HELP ARE CRYSTAL CLEAR. VAST MAJORITY OF THESE PEOPLE

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ARE NOT IN CAMPS BECAUSE THEY WISH TO ADD WEIGHT TO POLISARIO'S DEMANDS FOR SAHARAN INDEPENDENCE BUT BECAUSE LIFE UNDER MOROCCAN RULE HAD BEEN TOO DIFFICULT FOR THEM. AS WE HAVE DONE ELSEWHERE, WE SHOULD DO SOMETHING TO SHOW THESE REFUGEES OUR SYMPATHY. SUCH A GESTURE WILL IN THE LONG RUN BE GOOD POLITICS AS WELL AS HUMANE.

7. HAVING SAID THIS, WE CONCUR FULLY WITH EMBASSIES NOUAKCHOTT AND RABAT THAT OUR CONTRIBUTION SHOULD BE AS LOW-KEY AS POSSIBLE, PERHAPS THROUGH THE RED CROSS.

8. AS TO AMOUNT AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE, OUR RECOMMENDATIONS ARE:

A. \$200,000. AT TIME CONTRIBUTION OF \$100,000 MADE, REFUGEE FIGURE WAS ESTIMATED AT 15,000. FIGURE IS AT LEAST DOUBLE THAT NOW, AND WE BELIEVE AMOUNT

SHOULD BE INCREASED ACCORDINGLY. IT GOES WITHOUT
SAYING THAT, BY STANDARDS USUALLY EXPECTED OF US, THIS
WOULD BE A TOKEN CONTRIBUTION.

B. CASH, PROVIDED IT CAN BE HANDLED IN AS LOW
A KEY FASHION AS A CONTRIBUTION IN KIND. CASH CONTRIBUTION
WOULD BE EASIER, WE SUSPECT, FOR UNHCR TO HANDLE.
IF DEPARTMENT AND US MISSION GENEVA BELIEVE THAT A
CONTRIBUTION IN KIND PREFERABLE AND CAN BE HANDLED
WE PREPARED DEFER TO THEIR VIEWS.LYNE

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 12-May-1977 12:00:00 am
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Drafter: n/a
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